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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES


SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN LIBERIA: UNEVEN PROGRESS

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES**

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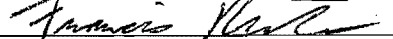
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Security Sector Reform in Liberia: Uneven Progress

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Thesis: Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Liberia, as executed by responsible nations and agencies, has only been marginally effective because it has failed to fully integrate across their areas of responsibility in its execution of SSR.

Discussion: There have been varying degrees of crisis throughout Africa in the last twenty years. After fourteen years of civil war in Liberia the UN under UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1509 in 2003 reestablished security for its people and its borders. Under this Resolution, the United Nations Mission of Liberia (UNMIL) was formed and directed to initiate Security Sector Reform (SSR) within the post-conflict country. Within SSR, there are four areas where SSR efforts can be detailed: unified approach to SSR, Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) training and development, establishment of the Rule of Law, and Spoilers. While the U.S. is designated as the lead country for training and development of the new AFL, close coordination and a unified approach to all four of these efforts are critical to achieve overall progress in SSR.

Conclusion: SSR in Liberia has had an inconsistent application of training efforts and a lack of unified action between the agencies across their areas of responsibility. My research led me to conclude this is the leading cause of why SSR has been marginally effective.

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INTRODUCTION:

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN LIBERIA

Security Sector Reform (SSR) can occur at any time along the spectrum of conflict. Its sustainable success is influenced by successes within stability operations. This paper seeks to analyze whether SSR is an effective tool to address reform in post-conflict Liberia. It examines the unified approach applied to programs within SSR employed to address reform in Liberia from 2003-2010.

Since the formation of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), there has been much momentum toward developing stronger partnerships by employing SSR with the fifty-three African countries in the region. This security cooperation effort is articulated in the 2008 Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF) document that directs campaign and contingency plans for all Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) to include AFRICOM. In section F-5 of the GEF, AFRICOM must consider stability operations across all phases by addressing major military tasks of stability operations. Additionally, there are two Theater Strategic End states:

End state 1: African countries and organizations are able to provide for their own security and contribute to security on the continent.

End state 2: African countries and organizations will maintain professional militaries that respond to civilian authority, respect the rule of law and abide by international human rights.

Effective SSR enables a state to build its capacity to provide security and justice that ultimately lead to stability. The four elements of SSR are justice, police, border patrol, and defense sector reform. In order to achieve the desired outcomes of SSR, the U.S. considers this program to be a success when there is an effective and legitimate security sector rooted within the rule of law that has transitioned to the ownership of the host nation.¹

As applied to Liberia's successful post-conflict stabilization, this paper will cover four main efforts in SSR:

1. Unified approach to SSR
2. Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Training and Development
3. Establishing the Rule of Law
4. Spoilers in SSR

The study will begin with the construct as defined in the U.S. Army's *Field Manual* (FM) 3-07 *Stability Operations*, discuss the programs that have been successful, and examine Liberia as a case study for future SSR considerations within the West African region. For purposes of this analysis, FM 3-07 defines SSR as "the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that a government undertakes to improve the way it provides safety, security, and justice."² Army doctrine is consistent and compatible with Joint doctrine. Therefore, FM 3-07 has merit in its use for this definition because it links stability operations doctrine to joint operations doctrine as expressed in joint doctrinal publications, specifically, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 and JP 5-0.³ SSR activities support Stability Operations and are defined by JP 3-0 as "various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief." The definition of SSR by the U.S. Army and the joint definition of stability operations effectively capture the role of military forces to support broader governmental efforts.⁴

In keeping with the U.S. tradition of partnership with foreign governments and organizations, SSR enables stability operations and builds on the activities that support peace and

effective governance.⁵ Liberia is an ideal case study for this project because of the US and international involvement in its post-conflict struggle to regain government stability and rule of law. Unfortunately, an inconsistent application of training efforts with other governmental agencies has made SSR programs only marginally effective in Liberia.

The United States' SSR agenda closely aligns with the agendas of the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and coordinates well with their approach to SSR. This historical overlap agenda has created a tradition of unified effort within the international community. The U.S. *National Security Strategy* (NSS) (2010) also provides SSR guidance, stating that, "Our military will continue strengthening its capacity to partner with foreign counterparts, train and assist security forces, and pursue military-to-military ties with a broad range of governments."⁶ The NSS also discusses the need for the U.S. to work with its international partners to achieve successful engagements in the development of capabilities and strengthening of failed states.⁷ Therefore, within the context of both FM 3-07 and the NSS, the primary role of the DoD regarding Liberia is the reform, restructuring, or reestablishment of the armed forces and the defense sector – and outlined in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1509.⁸

The challenges inherent to SSR, an ill-structured or *wicked* problem, preclude the use of linear, analytical problem-solving methods. While many military organizations, the State Department and NGOs are comfortable in frameworks and doctrinal templates, they must resist the temptation to apply a well-structured process to a chaotic situation--especially when considering Liberia. However, Design informs problem-solving for ill-structured, wicked problems to enable planning, which is an inherently structured activity, to provide direction and guidance. JP 5-0 discusses the Design process for addressing wicked problems and guides

planners in problem solving to achieve the ends. Flexibility, designing the way ahead with key personnel on the ground, implementing milestones and feedback mechanisms, and a shared mental model will lend itself to solutions that can only be categorized as “good” or “better.” Ill-structured problems are difficult for the international community, since there is no ultimate test of success for a solution to a wicked problem. Moreover, once the decided solution is put into motion, there will be varying degrees of response and will generate waves of consequences over time. The four efforts identified in this paper concerning Liberia’s SSR program will address the solutions implemented from 2003-2010 and how adjustments over time fit the new environment as it changed.⁹

THE ROADMAP TO CRISIS AND U.S. RESPONSE

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) was established in 1962 with the primary mission of defending the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Liberia. Figure 2: Map of Liberia. Unfortunately, during the fourteen-year civil war leading up to 2003, the AFL became engaged in internal security, a mission traditionally held by the country’s police force. National defense forces serving as police illustrates a lack of legitimate state authority in Liberia during the civil war. While the need existed to fill a public security vacuum left by the weak and ineffective state police, the AFL was not adequately trained for this mission. AFL serving as police without the appropriate training to support the civil authorities resulted in numerous complaints of human rights violations against the Liberians during the war.¹⁰

Liberia’s history is one of great brutality, with 3 million Liberians having suffered through two civil wars from 1989-96 and 1999-2003. President Charles Taylor left Liberia in 2003, which allowed the warring factions from the second civil war to sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). During this time, over 250,000 people lost their lives --most of them

civilian non-combatants, and more than 1 million were displaced.¹¹ Rape, torture, abductions, and human rights abuses occurred on a monumental level. The country's infrastructure was virtually destroyed. By the time the CPA was signed, there were no electrical grids, public running water, sewage systems, or other utilities in the country. Unemployment was high and child soldiers roamed the streets at night with automatic weapons.¹² The country was truly in a state of emergency, from the grassroots level up to the ministerial level.

To influence the transition of Liberia to a post-conflict state in 2003, the UN established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the largest peace-keeping force in the world under the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1509, with two specific SSR tasks:

1. To assist the transitional government of Liberia in monitoring and restructuring the police force of Liberia, consistent with democratic policing, to develop a civilian police training programme, and to otherwise assist in the training of civilian police, in cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), international organizations, and interested States.

2. To assist the transitional government in the formation of a new and restructured Liberian military in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations and interested States.¹³

Immediate security of the people in 2003 was a catalyst for SSR in Liberia. This was also the foundation for a robust UNMIL response of 15,000 soldiers who would assist in the restructuring of the police, develop a police training program, and assist in the training of civilian police in conjunction with ECOWAS.¹⁴ This brief history gives some sense of the longstanding challenges in Liberia's security reform. The greatest challenge for SSR in Liberia is rebuilding

trust in the emerging security apparatus after a history of violence and government predations on the population.

UNIFIED APPROACH TO SSR

The United States Government pursues a whole-of-government approach to SSR. The DoD, interagency partners and other civilian led organizations design and implement strategies for SSR. While each has their specific roles and responsibilities, implementation of these strategies requires coordination between the agencies and with the country team. Through unified action, SSR actors integrate and synchronize activities to achieve unity of effort across their areas of responsibilities. To achieve this inherently multinational effort, all actors must maintain a constant dialogue when executing the SSR strategy.¹⁵

Long-term success in stabilization and reform depends on good coordination among the Government of Liberia (GoL), the UN, the U.S. and donor nations. Unified action is a difficult task since each one of them brings its own priorities, specializations, constraints, and budgets. While unified action inherently results in stagnation, getting all the responsible nations, agencies and host-nation together to form a way ahead for the country is essential to understanding roles, responsibilities and a comprehensive way ahead. Challenges among these actors have influenced the slow speed at which SSR has progressed in Liberia.

Establishing feedback mechanisms, ensuring the GoL integrates into the planning effort, and outlining each agencies responsibility within the SSR process is critical to ensuring there is unified action in Liberia. The application of SSR in a country precludes a single template approach because each country's environment and situation is unique. In complexity theory, synchronization models do not work well when chaotic dynamics exist due to the ever-changing

environment of the system. Responsible nations and agencies did initially come to the table for planning SSR in Liberia in 2003 as evidenced by the UNSCR 1509. Each group articulated a way ahead, and gave their scope of responsibility, commitment and country or organizational dynamics. Unfortunately, no intersecting milestones or periodic reviews of progress were established to ensure the agencies approach was generally moving in the same direction. This is not to suggest that all efforts were to progress at the same speed. Identifying milestones and establishing periodic reviews of the overall approach provides the critical feedback mechanism to identify areas that lagged others and what impacts such uneven progress may have on the execution of the plan.¹⁶

Liberia's SSR planning efforts are under three leads; the GoL Governance Reform Commissions (GRC), the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Justice.¹⁷ Liberia's current solution model requires a flexible approach because local cooperation among agents occurs rather than a centralized direction for a perfect plan. Within the three leads, there can be no first among equals or a "supported" entity who has overall responsibility due to the extended focus on both defense and law enforcement reform. With these efforts, Liberia had many initial leadership challenges at the Ministry level and within the GOL itself in 2003. Many Liberian's had been fired from their positions and new leaders emerged to take their places with varying degrees of education and exposure to the systems they were asked to lead.¹⁸ Therefore, when the GoL participated in initial planning for SSR, many of its representatives lacked the capacity to speak on reforms.

Inconsistencies in the approach to training Liberia's security forces have influenced the slow speed at which SSR has taken hold in Liberia. The lead agency for U.S. efforts in Liberia is the US Embassy (USEM) under the Chief of Mission authority. The application of reform under

the USEMB under the Chief of Mission's authority publishes overarching guidance for the execution of SSR with the DoD, the State Department and private military companies (PMC) in Liberia. The UNMIL was designated by the UNSC for the responsibility of lead in supporting the development and reform of the Liberian National Police (LNP). There was much coordination concerning creating a similar pace for progress on the new AFL and the LNP. Unfortunately, there was disparity between their approaches and each saw different levels of advancement.¹⁹

The LNP faced three critical shortcomings in its development efforts. The UNMIL was responsible for the LNP development, meaning there was uncoordinated piecemeal support from donor nations. Next, the vetting for LNP recruits was thorough, which means the quality of police officers being recruited is lower and the individuals may have an unknown history of human rights violations. Lastly, the pay for the LNP was lower than the AFL for enlisted and officers, reducing recruitment for the LNP. Collectively, these constraints have resulted in a much slower development of a professional police force for Liberia.²⁰

ARMED FORCES OF LIBERIA (AFL) TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The United States understands public security to be a precondition for Liberia's successful peace conference. When UNMIL force entered the country in 2003, the U.S. knew security was the gravest concern during the initial phases of SSR in order to set conditions for a successful Comprehensive Peace Agreement. While this mission was routine in many ways, the context for U.S. efforts was relatively unique. The U.S. was not responding to a country to secure its borders against an invading enemy, but to restore democracy and integrate security reforms.²¹

The AFL, under President Charles Taylor, was an organization of lawless brutality against the people. Given this dynamic, the U.S. maintained an acute awareness of challenges between Liberian citizens and the former security force when beginning restructuring activities.²² How would the U.S. change the minds of Liberians from fearing their Army to trusting it with the security of their families?

When the CPA was signed, the U.S. plan for Defense Sector Reform (DSR) included rebuilding the AFL and re-establishing a Minister of Defense (MoD) from the top down. Figure 1. Sequencing of capabilities in DSR illustrates this approach to reform. The process started slowly and the first basic training class didn't begin until 2006.²³ Among the reasons for this three-year delay were the strained relationships between the defense sector and other security elements, the limited number of forces applied to this process, and an Army that was forming prior to developing corresponding capabilities at the Liberian MoD. Collectively, these inhibitors resulted in a stalled initial development for a clear strategy and continue to be challenges today.²⁴

Another inhibitor of progress was that the DoD was overextended worldwide with Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM and there were no forces available. As a result, the DoD determined was needed to reform the AFL in spring 2004, given these constraints. Bidders for a SSR contract included DynCorp and Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE). The U.S. granted DynCorp the overall AFL training contract in fall 2004. PAE secured a separate contract to train AFL officers because could not meet its contractual obligations requiring the letting of another contract.²⁵

Private contract firms training the AFL focused on developing a basic training and skill set within the AFL. Unit level processes for administration, logistics, and operations were not established by DynCorp trainers and their private sector bosses established the "bottom line"

which often did not complement the GoL goals for long-term development nor was it closely monitored by the U.S. Many of these processes did not exist prior to 2003 and had to be built from scratch. However, identifying institutional and functional development within the AFL should have led the DoD to contract for these specific development goals; far beyond training the baseline army soldier and officer.²⁶

The civil war in Liberia involved human rights violations on the part of, many men and women.²⁷ There were many recruitment challenges with the UNMIL stipulation of no human rights violations as part of the recruitment process for the AFL. Additionally, the absence of significant records combined with a limited ability to vet the backgrounds of potential members of the AFL or MoD also led to recruitment challenges.²⁸ After recruiting the first class of 2,000 men, DynCorp focused on rule of law and human rights. The training also emphasized such things as respect for international humanitarian law and the law of war, separation of army and police responsibilities and the centrality of civilian control of the military.²⁹ The U.S. and the GoL agreed on this training focus for the AFL as part of rebuilding the force.

Recruitment of women into the Army was a goal of the SSR process and agreed upon by the Liberian government. President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, the first female to be president on the African continent, set the initial goal of 20 percent female soldiers, but as of 2009, only 5 percent of the total force was female.³⁰ Difficulty in recruiting women and successfully training them through the current process continues to be a challenge for DynCorp. The practical challenges for increasing the percentage of women in the Army are great, since only a limited number of the nations' relatively few female high school graduates might want a military career.³¹ Although twenty percent is an aggressive goal, it clearly shows the Liberian government's commitment to representing women in its security forces.

After initial training is complete, AFL soldiers are identified for leadership potential and are sent to the NCO Academy. DynCorp modeled the AFL NCO Academy after the U.S. Army's Warrior Leader Course. By the end of June 2008, DynCorp had conducted four NCO courses, training 227 candidates, but commissioning only 33. Additionally, many of the 2,000 AFL soldiers are approaching the end of the initial enlistment in 2011. The Liberians have only just begun to think about how to fill the ranks as these enlistments expire throughout this year.³²

DynCorp trained the AFL in 2007, over four years after signing the peace agreement. The UN imposed an arms embargo constraint on the AFL and Liberian security forces through June 2006. After this moratorium, the UN Security Council finally lifted its arms embargo to permit Liberia to arm its newly trained security forces.³³ In addition to the challenges of private security companies executing AFL training previously identified, arming constraints imposed by the UN ensured progress would be slow.

The DoD recognized the requirement to transition training and capabilities from U.S. and donor country-led agencies to the AFL so they could support the LNP and the UNMIL. Therefore, U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) is currently supporting SSR with a five-year security force assistance effort called Operation ONWARD LIBERTY (OOL) that is coordinated with the assistance of the U.S. and ECOWAS partner nations. OOL, executed by a joint service team of sixty Marines, Soldiers, and Airmen marks the important milestone of the first transition of the responsibility for conducting training of AFL soldiers to the newly formed AFL.³⁴ OOL efforts are intended to help establish a stand-alone, professional army for Liberia that is capable of protecting its borders and aiding neighboring countries if the need arises.³⁵

After seven years of stagnated growth in the AFL, restructuring the U.S. commitment to the AFL training and establishment of the OOL program in 2010 was a recognized. The private

contractor efforts left the AFL still lacking in its ability to conduct daily missions in support of the country of Liberia. The U.S. Marine Corps Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC), in support of the Marine Component Commander - Africa (MARFORAF), identified this shortcoming in a CDRUSAFRICOM-directed assessment of the AFL.

In this assessment, SCETC identified shortfalls utilizing the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership/Education, Personnel and Facilities (DOTMLPF) construct.³⁶ SCETC reported a collective capability gap in the lack of functional national revenue system, lack of national infrastructure, lack of public and educational system, tribal/ethnic divisions and nepotism combined with various levels of corruption throughout the military.³⁷ The environment outlined above has negatively impacted the AFL's ability to build the capabilities and capacities to become a professional military able to accomplish its missions and tasks. Although this was the first assessment of its kind published on the AFL, it's a good baseline for where the Army is today and provides the Commander, AFRICOM, with recommendations and a way ahead and continues to execute OOL and security cooperation activities in Liberia.

RULE OF LAW

SSR cannot be effective without a functional RoL, functioning judiciary and a credible police force. Strengthening the Rule of Law (RoL) in Liberia is ongoing. In a country that was once plagued by police corruption and brutality, reestablishing popular trust in the security structure is a slow process. Army Field Manual 3-07 defines RoL as:

"A principle under which all persons, institutions, and entities, public and private, including the state itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, and that are consistent with international human rights principles."³⁸

For Liberia, this translates to the restructuring and rebuilding of the Liberian National Police (LNP) and rebuilding an institutional base for the RoL.³⁹ These two are complementary in the SSR process because a police force that the people trust to provide security for them is necessary in order for Rule of Law to translate legitimacy of the government to the grassroots level.

UNSCR 1509 designated the UNMIL as the lead organization for ROL in Liberia. The role of UNMIL was to support SSR through “The transitional government of Liberia in monitoring and restructuring the police force of Liberia, consistent with democratic policing, to develop a civilian police training programme, and to otherwise assist in the training of civilian police, in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations, and interested states.” Additionally, the CPA specifically cites security agencies that need to be restructured--in particular, the LNP.⁴⁰

UNMIL began by establishing a new police force and a new judiciary through the assistance of the UN Police (UNPOL). Thirty-five countries sent 1,240 officers to Liberia to begin advising the LNP and serve in other specialized billets, such as corrections, to establish a foundation to work from beginning in 2004.⁴¹ In the initial phases, UNMIL was responsible for maintaining security with what little security force existed in Liberia after the CPA was signed. The UNMIL initiated comprehensive census to identify those who claimed to be LNP. Five-thousand Liberian's claimed to be members of the LNP, many of whom had no uniforms or weapons, and claimed to not have been paid for the last few years.⁴²

To begin this process, the GoL and UNPOL established a number of screening events for new LNP recruits. They wanted to ensure they were recruiting people who had not committed crimes against humanity, would participate in a reformed police force that was professional, respects the RoL, and was apolitical. Interestingly, in 2006, when the first recruits came to the

stations, over fifteen Liberian counties were represented. This spread of counties spoke to the diversity of the people represented from the rural communities who were interested in supporting the new government. This wide recruitment also reversed the tide of a long standing neglect of the GoL to involve the rural community and gained legitimacy within the LNP organization.⁴³

Although there was success in initial recruitment throughout the rural community, this momentum experienced some challenges. Once the LNP mission began, UNPOL was directed to provide assistance and guidance to the very agency they were told to reconstitute. There was no real organization with the thirty-five countries working with the LNP nor was there consistent funding for common items like uniforms, paper and pens. This meant there was no budget for making the LNP operationally functional. Despite these constraints, the first class of police graduated in 2006 and there are currently over 3,500 LNP serving the people of Liberia today.⁴⁴

UNPOL has been successful at setting up a police training academy, recruiting police, establishing hiring criteria and vetting candidates in accordance with GoL instruction. All LNP must serve an initial two-year commitment and pass an extensive background check, much like the one the AFL requires for its candidates. Similar challenges between the LNP and AFL exist with the vetting process. There are limited resources to conduct the background checks, and when completed, oftentimes the checks are inadequate. Instead of the UNPOL checking on applicants within their communities or countrywide as DynCorp did with the AFL, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and agencies were responsible for vetting the LNP candidates.⁴⁵

UNPOL has seen measured success in terms of police performance – though not necessarily in terms of police throughput in the academy. Since Liberian police forces provided little, if any security for the people at the local level as recent as eight years ago, the police's

presence and significant improvement of its reputation with the people is an indicator of this performance. There are still reports of police soliciting bribes from the Liberians. However, the communities seem to consider this acceptable since their LNP are no longer predatory in the execution of their duties.⁴⁶

Today, more focus needs to be on training the LNP to be responsive to the people of their local communities. The relatively few numbers of trained LNP places a premium on those to be efficient in their duties. Unfortunately, this shortfall is directly related to the slow progress in the arena of RoL. Without established enforceable laws outlined by the Minister of Justice (MoJ) the LNP will continue to struggle with enforcing the law and lack the understanding of procedures for crime and evidence. Slow development at the ministerial level results in poor investigations and slow adjudications. Additionally, a poor relationship between the LNP and the judicial system created a strained liaison, where there could be ideally a strong connection.⁴⁷

Developing a strong judiciary to support the RoL, rather than just security force assistance to build a police force, is extremely important to uphold the RoL and to help rebuild public trust and confidence in the institution. Advisors within the UNMIL legal and judicial system support division are working with the MoJ to draft laws that protect Liberians from human trafficking, rape and have instituted drug reforms. These laws ensure the Liberian government is responsive to its citizens' grievances and build credibility in the statutory system. Unfortunately, many of the rural areas still do not have a physical structure for a courthouse. However, the training of justices, prosecutors, lawyers, magistrates and clerks remain a constant growth within the MoJ; representatives are sent out to these areas or they co-locate with other businesses in the absence of a courthouse. Additionally, the GoL continues to reach out to these areas with mobile courts, and focus on jail visits to ensure its citizens have access to due process.

With this persistent effort from UNMIL, the GoL's judicial system is currently implementing solutions for the many problems and challenges Liberia's justice system faced prior to the re-establishment of RoL efforts after 2003.⁴⁸

Weaknesses within the judiciary and the need for restructuring was tasked to UNMIL in UNSCR 1509: To begin this process, a new Supreme Court was inaugurated in January 2004. Rebuilding a new judiciary has historically suffered from the same corruption and ineffectiveness as the police and army. As of 2004, judges are required to be law school graduates and earn about \$1,000/month. Although they are well educated and earn a substantial living in Liberia, the judges are not regularly paid because of the continued economic crisis. Given the inconsistent pay situation, many judges maintain their corrupt behaviors. This continues to be a concern since the decay of justice was a contributor to the last civil war.⁴⁹

In conclusion, the Liberian RoL process continues to be slow and somewhat fragile. However, the success stories of the new formation of a police force, the people's general direction of trust toward the LNP and creation of a judiciary are basic indicators that the UNMIL has applied generally good solutions to this problem.⁵⁰

SPOILERS IN SSR

In order for SSR to take shape in a country, engagement with the non-state actors is extremely important. Their continued presence in a post-conflict country can easily bring much instability and many challenges to the new systems of authority and government, which are in the infant stages of development and often times in recovery as well. The countries or agencies involved in reestablishing RoL and security must have a careful plan to engage those who might be motivated to "spoil" reform efforts. According to 2007 RAND report commissioned by the US and the GoL, the continued existence of rebel groups remains a concern to security.⁵¹

However, these rebel groups can also act as force multipliers if a reconciliation process enables them to become part of the reform process instead of feeling isolated from it.⁵²

UNMIL removed thousands of Liberians from the AFL and MoD in 2003. There was also a large segment of the population who had supported the AFL, even though this organization killed, raped and tortured its own people. Once many former members of the AFL found themselves without jobs and a voice in the future of Liberia, dissent resonated among the people. For the first time in eight years, these former AFL members were unable to make a living and feed their families. These former AFL members, even if not part of a formal security apparatus, could potentially contribute to security at the community level. On the other hand, these same persons are capable of spoiling any success and progress for SSR because they feel isolated from it.⁵³

The two greatest spoilers in Liberia are high unemployment and economic constraints.⁵⁴ Liberia's demographic challenges resonate in the thirty percent of the population who are under the age of 30. Many Liberian youths can become spoilers because they are unable to find jobs in the new economy of 85% unemployment. These dynamics have a direct effect on security for the country when these young men and women are potential recruitment targets for militant groups.⁵⁵

Several critical vulnerabilities for SSR in Liberia included unemployment, food shortages, poverty, disease, Liberia's sub-regional security, and continued land and family disputes. These factors continue to undermine the efforts of the new army and police to establish authority and rule of law. The long history of a corrupt security and government system that its citizens suffered also hinders the efforts of the new Liberian defense and police forces.

President Sirleaf-Johnson ensured the CPA specifically addressed the integration of women into the new government and security sector. Women have had limited access to education, jobs and training for decades leading up to 2003, which contributed to their disproportionate levels of poverty as compared to their male counterparts. This financial constraint and their low social standing contributed to a historically high recruitment of women as combatants in Liberia. During the last civil war, women accounted for 30-40% of former combatants. These women remain potential spoilers because of their increased vulnerability to recruitment into militant groups and their exploitation once in the group.⁵⁶ To combat this vulnerability, the GoL has directed specific provisions for access to jobs for women and has reformed laws concerning crimes against women. These most critical changes in post-conflict Liberia is the expansion of much-needed access to jobs, education and personal security to women through the SSR process.

Former AFL members have an integral role to play in Liberia's continued process. The inclusion of warring factions in the SSR process is important to a comprehensive approach to peace. UNMIL continues programs to reform and reintroduce former AFL and other groups who served under Charles Taylor. If this reconciliation and reintegration occurs, there is a greater chance for success, which reduces potential for a relapse in conflict within Liberia. When these factions are included in the SSR process and non-state actors' voices are heard, it is possible this action will provide a positive voice for ownership of the process instead of feelings of further discrimination.⁵⁷ However, reforming these groups back into the GoL system process remains a weak endorsement that the approach will have lasting success.

In order to reinforce the peace process initiated in 2003, leaders from the UNMIL helped to develop networks for peace. This decentralized and to counteract the spoilers and effects of

the warring factions. These leaders assisted in reestablishing the network of organizations and people who wanted a peaceful Liberia and some were recruited into the security forces. Within the first few years, these networks expanded and began to absorb failures with the fragile systems that were being implemented. Engagement with spoilers and former AFL members has repaired some of the social structures the groups had been attempting to exploit back into violence. This has ultimately led to preempting much of the unrest, and conflict has not reoccurred.⁵⁸

RECOMMENATION 1: LONG-TERM COMMITMENT FROM DONOR NATIONS FOR SUPPORT TO LIBERIA

Long-term commitment from donor nations to support SSR resides in the coordination among the donor countries, the UN, NGOs and the host nation. A persistent commitment in Liberia would have positively resulted in a better coordinated approach to SSR. With so many competing agendas and restrictions to personnel, budgeting and resources, the UN rightly points out these constraints as hindrances to progress in accomplishing the goals set forth by the UNSCR 1509 and the CPA.⁵⁹

When there is a persistent commitment from donor nations to assist in SSR, there is an increased chance that the provisions identified by the UNSCR are planned such that each agency or country has its way forward and is agreed upon by the host nation. This also means that donor countries and agencies should have sat down with the host nation to ensure there was buy-in. In the case of Liberia, this did occur to a certain degree, but there was little follow up between agencies and responsible nations throughout the process. One positive outcome was the interim government agreed to the way ahead as detailed by the CPA. These participants could have had a better unified effort if the UNMIL strategy facilitated such coordination.

It is naïve to believe that all these agencies and donor countries will be completely coordinated in the execution of their commitments under the UNSCR 1509, especially when conditions on the ground change frequently, budgets are constrained, and the number of personnel available fluctuates. The systems that are set in motion by these stakeholders will also respond with change and self-adjust; these adjustments are still in general alignment with the overall design of the new end state. Coordination implies that if the environment changes as a result of the energy put into a particular system, the end state may change as well. Differing rates of progress among different programs is not inherently problematic. However, when there is no consistent milestone review to address these different rates, then adjustments within each system to keep a reasonable trend in the same general direction are impossible.

Unfortunately, failure to make adjustments within the systems towards identified milestones currently constrains progress within the AFL and the LNP. These two sectors have progressed at such different rates that the security provided is inconsistent and needs more persistent focus on institutional development, core security competencies, and capacity-building to be successful. The U.S. has committed to taking over the AFL training and development for the next 5 years as of 2010. This commitment is significant to completing the strategy set in motion eight years ago. UNMIL must engage with the other responsible countries and agencies to ensure there is full integration across their areas of responsibility and milestones are developed and met.

With these shortcomings recognized by the countries, agencies and organizations committed to continuing stabilizing Liberia, resuming discussion of Liberia's future would be helpful to ensure there better unified action as the environment continues to change there.

RECOMMENDATION 2: CONSIDER SCETC'S 2010 ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSED WAY AHEAD

The MARFOR assessment analysis conducted by SCETC for AFRICOM in 2010 identified institutional and operational level capabilities necessary for the AFL to accomplish its mission and tasks. This analysis provided four overarching tasks necessary for the AFL to become a professional force that obeys the RoL and has the capability/capacity to accomplish these tasks. They are:

1. The ability to develop and manage doctrine and Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP).
2. Develop and manage a Table of Organization (T/O) based upon a reprioritization of its capabilities.
3. Establish formalized training processes and programs to maintain a professionally capable force.
4. Develop manpower-related regulations.

The SCETC assessment focuses on what an organization does in its day-to-day functioning, in terms of DOTMLPF. The AFL development requires capabilities for a professional force. By implementing the four recommendations, the U.S. is professionalizing the AFL by structure, but not by values, ethics, or actual required skills. A more comprehensive study by AFRICOM to address this shortcoming in SCETC's assessment and recommendation is needed to ensure successful AFL development over the next five years.

CONCLUSION

There is no "lead nation" for SSR in post-conflict Liberia. The UNMILs approach to SSR in Liberia has been only marginally effective because it has failed to integrate holistically across their areas of responsibility in its execution of SSR. Some of this marginal effectiveness include the

disjointed and slow progress made by DynCorps in developing the AFL, by the many countries with competing agendas who were developing the LNP, and a fledgling RoL system that was not concurrently functioning to support the rebuilding of security forces in the country. While each of these institutions progressed at their own pace, there was never a unified effort instituted to manage their development over time.

UNSCR 1509 designated the U.S. as lead for developing and training the new AFL. This mandate also designated other donor countries to develop Liberia's security element, the LNP, which fell under the auspice of UNPOL, for post-conflict Liberia's SSR. While there may have been varying degrees of initial coordination, once the deliberations were over, those agencies and donor countries then began their own movement toward reaching the goals set by the mandate. UNMIL consistent tracking of milestones for progress and feedback along the four restricting efforts identified in this thesis were never identified.

When considering a wicked problem such as how to apply SSR effectively in post-conflict Liberia, there can never be full integration from all actors with the exact same amount of energy applied to each aspect of the solution set. This is true for Liberia, as each element within SSR progressed at different rates of success and failures. The ends must remain the same – the ways can adjust, but progress cannot be published when mechanisms are not in place.

UNMIL's lack of unity of effort for SSR in Liberia led to disjoint progress in reforming Liberian security institutions. Although UNSCR 1509 designated many lead nations and agencies to address each element within the SSR strategy, the UNMIL failed to integrate these nations and agencies various efforts through such mechanisms as feedback systems and milestone development. Having these basic mechanisms in place would have allowed information on shared progress to flow between them and shared baseline of advancement

towards the ends. Unity of effort accounts for the needed flexibility of the UNMIL strategy for SSR in Liberia and is critical due to the ever-changing environment of the country.

The UNMIL, along with responsible nations and agencies continue to develop more effective approaches to SSR in Liberia. It has proved to be an excellent country to identify shortcomings and better practices for the future as the UN and contributing countries look at their strategies of engagement. Unified effort, as directed by the UNMIL, will limit disconnects between the ends, ways and means in future SSR strategies.

Figure 1. Sequencing of Defense Sector Reform Capabilities

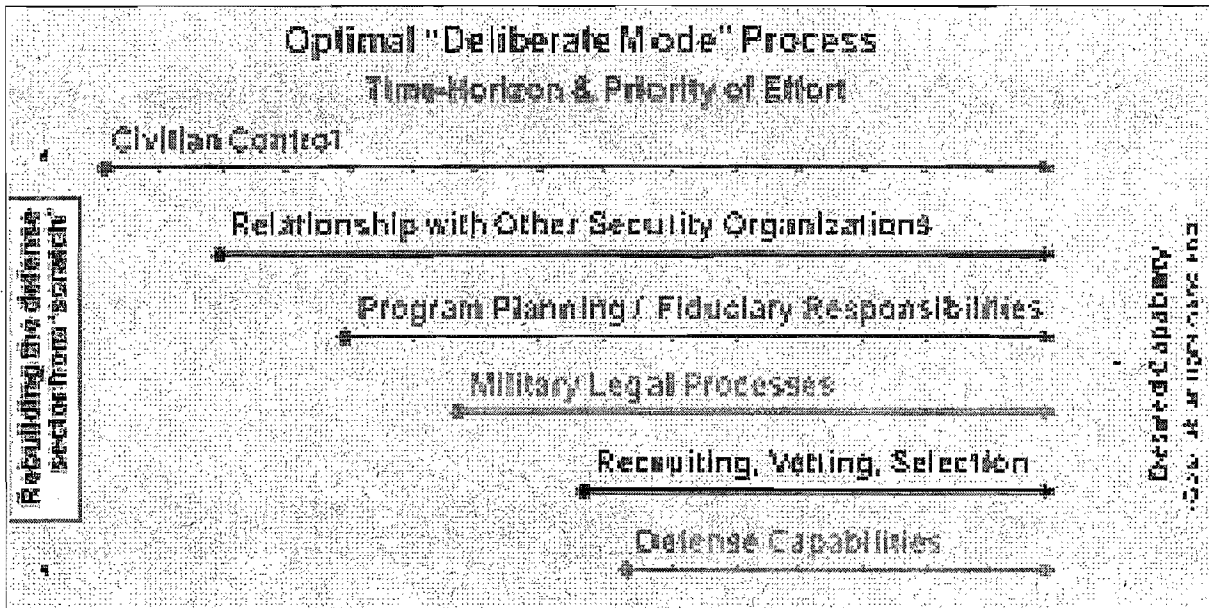
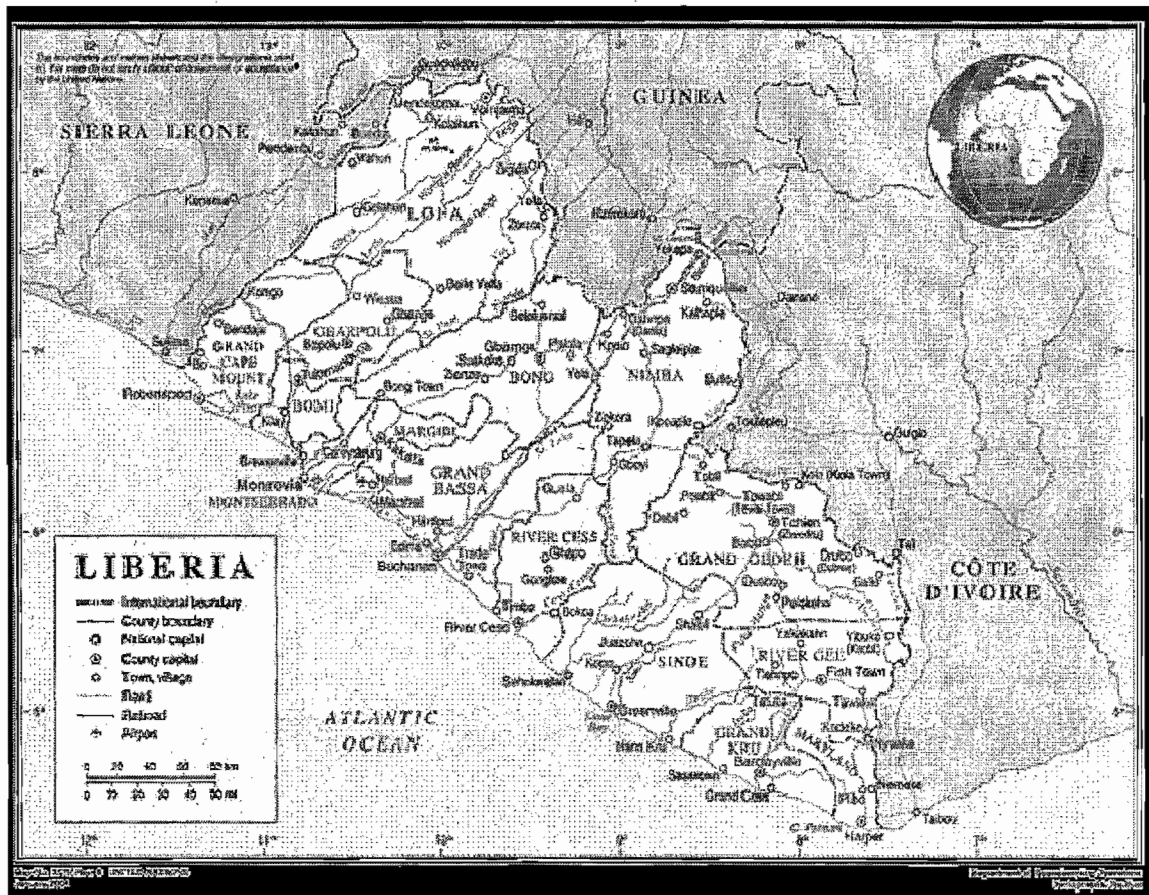


Figure 2. Map of Liberia



Map of Liberia, No. 3775, Rev. 6, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section, 2004

GLOSSARY

SSR- Security Sector Reform

AFL- Armed Forces Liberia

AFRICOM- US. Africa Command

CPA- Comprehensive Peace Agreement

DOTMLPF- Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership/Education, Personnel and Facilities

EU- European Union

GEF- Guidance for Employment of the Force

GoL- Government of Liberia

LNP- Liberian National Police

MARFOR- Marine Component Commander

NGO- Non Governmental Organizations

OECD- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

RoL- Rule of Law

UN- United Nations

UNMIL- United Nations Mission in Liberia

UNPOL- UN Police

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